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NEWSLETTER

99-997

April 18, 1985

Washington DC

MORE OCEAN INCINERATION HEARINGS PLANNED IN BROWNSVILLE. The Environmental Protection Agency has once again chosen Brownsville as the site for public hearings on at-sea incineration of liquid hazardous wastes. All remember we did this nearly two years ago and your Congressman testified against any hasty issuance of a permit for the actual use of the Vulcanus incineration ship for such a purpose in the Gulf.

Now EPA is taking a different tack--and because I am beginning to receive much mail from Valley residents on this subject I feel a clarification is needed. This new hearing by EPA is in no way connected with the issuance of a permit to any industry or business for the purpose of immediate at-sea incineration.

This next round of hearings, scheduled for April 25 in Brownsville, will focus on a new proposal by EPA for examining the scientific and technical aspects of ocean incineration. This is an effort to formulate a research strategy and to propose specific regulations for ocean incineration. This follows my earlier request that the agency concentrate on the technological particulars before any operational permits are granted.

The purpose of the EPA hearing in Brownsville is to receive public input on the technical pros and cons of at-sea incineration as well as public commentary on the permit application process. I feel we should give this process a chance to work before putting a halt to the entire effort.

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MORE THAN TOKEN, BUT LESS THAN SUBSTANTIAL. This is the way your Congressman describes recent action by the USDA in the wake of the President's veto of emergency credit assistance for the nation's farmers. No way is this sour grapes--in fact, I telephoned the USDA and thanked the Department for its efforts. And this despite the fact that I would have preferred the emergency credit legislation to have gained the President's approval.

The USDA has announced that farmers who have mature, or maturing, grain reserve loans from the Commodity Credit Corporation can repledge their crop as collateral for a new loan that would mature in 12 months.

After a farmer has reached the minimum 3 years in the farmer-owned grain reserve loan program, he has the option of going another 12 months under this new loan arrangement and continue to receive storage payments. This will help a little because

under the current rules a farmer who has hit the 3 year ceiling must either repay his commodity loan or forfeit the grain to the government. This, in effect, gives him another 12 months and a new loan to tide him over.

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WHOOPIING CRANES LEAVE ARANSAS WILDLIFE REFUGE. The rare whooping cranes which spend their winters in the wetlands of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge have recently begun their 2,000+ mile migration back to the edge of Canada's Northwest Territories where they will lay and tend their eggs in family pairs for the summer months.

Here are the migration statistics from the U S Fish and Wildlife Service: a total of 85 whooping cranes came down to Texas for the 1984/85 winter season (70 adults and 15 young) in Aransas. The birds begin their courtship rituals in March and then leave the Aransas refuge in pairs! All but about 18 birds have now left Aransas for the long trip to Canada. The remaining 18 birds will leave quite soon.

The pairs will pass through Nebraska and the Dakotas, and will mate along the way. By the time they reach Wood Buffalo National Park in Northern Canada, the eggs will be ready to lay in the nest. Of the total 85 birds who returned to Aransas this winter, there were two single adults who had apparently lost their mates on the trip South. These two single adults (a male and female) paired-up at Aransas and the Fish and Wildlife Service considers it the romance of the year!

Unfortunately, only 84 of the total 85 birds will leave Aransas this month. There was one fatality. An adult male was killed by an avian predator--the Fish and Wildlife Service believes the predator to have been either a bald eagle or a great horned owl.

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LA VILLA'S NEW PAVILION. It was quite a honor when the city of La Villa, and our good friend Mayor Hector Elizondo and the city's Aldermen, named its new pavilion in La Villa Park as the "Kika de la Garza Pavilion." I've expressed my gratitude to the city and I wanted all the city's residents to know how grateful I am for this accolade.

Again, I accepted this honor in your name, my constituents, my family, my friends and all who have touched my life along the way. This is a tribute to you.

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VISITORS FROM SOUTH TEXAS. Mr and Mrs Truett Whitmire of Jourdanton; Miss Martha Guerra and Miss Marissa Marmolejo of Edinburg.

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